



Fire Safety

Summer Fire Safety Tips

USFA's National Fire Data Center estimates that yearly outside cooking grills cause more than 6,000 fires, over 5 fatalities, more than 170 injuries, and \$35 million in property loss. Gas grills alone cause over 2,700 fires, 80 injuries, and \$11 million dollars damage. Most of the gas grill fires and explosions were caused by gas leaks, blocked tubes, and overfilled propane tanks.

In addition to outdoor cooking, improper use of fireworks causes more than 6,000 fires and more than \$8 million in damage.

Families also enjoy camping in the summer. It is important to follow the park's rules for the use and extinguishing of campfires.

Summertime should be a time for fun and making happy memories. Knowing a few fire safety tips and following instructions will help everyone have a safe summer.

Fireworks Safety

- The best way to enjoy fireworks is to visit public fireworks displays put on by professionals who know how to safely handle fireworks.
- If you plan to use fireworks, make sure they are legal in your area.
- Never light fireworks indoors or near dry grass.
- Always have a bucket of water and/or a fire extinguisher nearby. Know how to operate the fire extinguisher properly.
- Do not wear loose clothing while using fireworks.
- Stand several feet away from lit fireworks. If a device does not go off, do not stand over it to investigate it. Put it out with water and dispose of it.
- Always read the directions and warning labels on fireworks. If a device is not marked with the contents, direction and a warning label, do not light it.
- Supervise children around fireworks at all times.

Barbecue Safety

- Before using a grill, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line. Make sure the venturi tubes - where the air and gas mix - are not blocked.
- Do not overfill the propane tank.
- Do not wear loose clothing while cooking at a barbecue.
- Be careful when using lighter fluid. Do not add fluid to an already lit fire because the flame can flashback up into the container and explode.
- Keep all matches and lighters away from children. Teach your children to report any loose matches or lighters to an adult immediately. Supervise children around outdoor grills.
- Dispose of hot coals properly - douse them with plenty of water, and stir them to ensure that the fire is out. Never place them in plastic, paper or wooden containers.
- Never grill/barbecue in enclosed areas - carbon monoxide could be produced.
- Make sure everyone knows to Stop, Drop and Roll in case a piece of clothing does catch fire. Call 911 or your local emergency number if a burn warrants serious medical attention.

Campfire Safety

- Build campfires where they will not spread, away from dry grass and leaves.
- Keep campfires small, and don't let them get out of hand.
- Keep plenty of water and a shovel around to douse the fire when you're done. Stir it and douse it again with water.
- Never leave campfires unattended.

Water Safety

Drowning claims the lives of over 4,000 people every year. Although all age groups are represented, children 0-4 have the highest death rate due to drowning.

In 1998, 500 children under the age of five drowned. Most drowning and near-drowning happen when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub. The National Safety Council encourages adults to establish and adhere to strict water safety rules.

Never leave a child alone near water—at the pool, the beach or in the tub—a tragedy can occur in seconds. If you must leave, take your child with you.

Always use approved personal floatation devices (life jackets.) The U.S. Coast Guard estimates nearly 9 of 10 drowning victims were not wearing one.

Beware of neighborhood pools—be it your own or your neighbors. Remove toys from in and around the pool when not in use. Toys can attract children to the pool.

For pools, barriers can offer added protection against drowning. Power or manual covers will completely cover a pool and block access to the water, however, be sure to drain any standing water from the surface of the pool cover as a child can drown in very small amounts of water.

Enroll children over age three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. But keep in mind that lessons don't make your child "drown-proof."

Older children risk drowning when they overestimate their swimming ability or underestimate the water depth.

Teach your children these four key swimming rules:

- Always swim with a buddy.
- Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Jump feet first to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.
- Don't push or jump on others.
- Be prepared for an emergency.

Never consume alcohol when operating a boat.

Always have a first-aid kit and emergency phone contacts handy. Parents should be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

Winter Fire Safety Tips

- In this age of high energy cost, the price of heating the home will increase. People will be searching for alternate sources to heat their homes. Some of the many ways people will stay warm this winter include; wood burning stoves, electric space heaters, kerosene heaters, fireplaces, and furnaces.
- Although acceptable, these methods are a major contributor to residential fires each year, many of which could have been prevented with proper fire safety measures. Following the links below you will find fire safety tips which can help you maintain a fire safe home this winter.
- Adding insulation to your house can save energy but, you should have a qualified electrician check your homes electrical system for deficiencies. When installing insulation always, make sure insulation is kept away from ceiling light fixtures and other heat sources.

Wood burning appliances – stoves and fireplaces

Experts do not recommend the purchase or installation of any wood burning stove unless it is air-tight and has controlled airflow. If you are burning a lot of wood, your stovepipe and chimney may have a heavy buildup of creosote which can lead to a fire in your chimney which could spread to the roof of your home. Fireplace chimneys should be inspected and cleaned at least once a year, stovepipe chimneys check once a month and clean as needed.

Insure proper installation.

Adequate clearance for wood stoves, at least 36 inches from combustible surfaces. Insure you have adequate floor support and protection.

Wood stoves should be of good quality, solid construction and design, and should be UL listed.

Have a chimney professionally inspected annually and cleaned if necessary, especially if it has not been used in some time.

Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate a fire in a fireplace or wood stove.

Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening to prevent embers or sparks from escaping

A wood-burning stove should be burned hot twice a day for 15 to 30 minutes to reduce the amount of creosote buildup.

Don't use excessive amounts of paper to build roaring fires in fireplaces or wood stoves. Overbuilding the fire could ignite creosote in the chimney.

Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.

Keep flammable materials away from your fireplace or wood stove mantel. A spark from the fireplace could easily ignite these materials.

Before you go to sleep, be sure your fireplace fire is out. Never close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace or wood stove. A closed damper can help rekindle the fire, forcing toxic carbon monoxide into the house.

If synthetic logs are used, follow the directions on the package. Never break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire, and never use more than one log at a time. They often burn unevenly, releasing higher levels of carbon monoxide.

Furnace

Your furnace should be inspected on a regular basis by a qualified professional to ensure it is good working condition. A malfunctioning furnace can produce carbon monoxide, the "silent killer", which can spread throughout your home. A furnace with an undetected gas leak can create a highly flammable and explosive environment. Change the units filter once a month and have a qualified professional check the unit once a year. Install carbon monoxide detectors following manufactures guidelines.

Have your furnace inspected to ensure that it is in good working condition.

Be sure all furnace controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition.

Leave furnace repairs to qualified specialists. Do not attempt repairs yourself unless you are qualified.

Inspect the walls and ceiling near the furnace and along the chimney line. If the wall is hot or discolored, additional pipe insulation or clearance may be required.

Check the flue pipe and pipe seams. Ensure they are well-supported and free of holes or cracks? Look for soot along or around seams, this can indicate a leak.

Check the chimney, make sure it is solid; there are no cracks or loose bricks? All unused flue openings should be sealed with solid masonry.

Keep trash and other combustibles away from the heating system.

Kerosene heaters

Be sure your heater is in good working condition. Inspect exhaust parts for carbon buildup. Be sure the heater has an emergency shut off in case the heater is tipped over.

Never use fuel burning appliances without proper room venting. Burning fuel (coal, kerosene or propane, for example) can produce deadly fumes.

Use only the fuel recommended by the heater manufacturer. Never substitute gas or any other fuel into a unit not designed for that fuel.

Keep kerosene and other flammable liquids stored in approved metal containers, in well-ventilated areas, outside of the house.

Never fill the heater while it is operating or hot. When refueling an oil or kerosene unit, avoid overfilling. Do not use cold fuel because it may expand in the tank as it warms up, causing overflow.

Refueling should be done outside never inside the home or garage.

Keep young children away from space heaters, especially when they are wearing night gowns or other loose-fitting clothing that can be easily ignited.

When using a fuel-burning appliance in the bedroom, be sure there is proper ventilation to prevent a build up of carbon monoxide.

Never use space heaters to dry clothing.

Keep all flammable objects at least three feet from space heaters.

Electric Space Heaters

The number of residential fires always goes up during colder months, peaking between December and February. Portable space heaters substantially contribute to this increase. Before plugging in your space heater, make sure you know how to use it safely: Carefully read the directions for its use.

Never place a space heater where a child or pet could accidentally knock it over.

Never place a space heater too close to a bed, especially a child's bed.

Keep newspapers, magazines, and fabrics from curtains, clothes, or bedding away from space heaters.

Heaters should be at least 3 feet from anything flammable.

If you use an electric heater, be sure not to overload the circuit. Use only extension cords that have the necessary rating to carry the amp load. Choose an extension cord the same size or larger than the appliance electrical cord.

Avoid using electrical space heaters in bathrooms or other areas where they may come in contact with water.

Never allow anything to cover the cord such as a rug; this can produce a fire from the radiated heat.

Additional Winter Heating Safety Tips

Never use a gas or charcoal grill inside the home.

Portable electric generators must be used outside, never indoors or in an area that allows CO to collect.

Holiday Fire Hazards

If you use a real Christmas tree in your home, make sure to water it daily.

Electric lights should never be hung on a dried-out tree. The potential for fire is drastically increased if the tree is dead and dry.

All lights and lighted window ornaments should be inspected every year to ensure cords are not worn or frayed.

All candles should be used with care. According to the NFPA, the number of fires started by candles nearly doubles during the month of December.

Smoke Alarms

Having smoke alarms in the home reduces the risk of dying in a fire by 50%. Check all smoke alarms in your home to ensure they are in working order.

Vacuum dust from existing smoke alarms.

You should have an alarm on every level of your home as well as one in each bedroom.

If your smoke alarm uses regular 9-Volt batteries, remember to replace them two times a year. (Hint: change your batteries when you change your clock in the spring and fall). Test your smoke alarms monthly, and be sure your children are familiar with the sound of the alarm.

Almost 60% of all fatal residential fires occur in homes that don't have smoke alarms, so this may be the single most important thing you can do to keep your family safe from fires.

Because smoke rises, smoke alarms should always be placed on ceilings or high on walls.

If a smoke alarm near the kitchen goes off while you're cooking, do not take the battery out of it - you may forget to replace it. Open the doors and windows instead.

If you're having a new home built or remodeling an older home, you may also want to

consider adding a home sprinkler system. These are already found in many apartment buildings and dormitories.

Fire Extinguishers

Keep fire extinguishers handy, they should be strategically placed around the house, at least one on each floor.

The kitchen should have an all purpose extinguisher, this can be used on grease and electrical fires. Fire extinguishers are best used when a fire is contained in a small area, like a wastebasket, and when the fire department has already been called. According to the NFPA, remember the word PASS when operating an extinguisher:

P ull the pin. Release the lock with the nozzle pointing away from you.

A im low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.

S queeze the lever slowly and evenly.

S weep the nozzle from side to side.

The best time to learn how to use the fire extinguisher is now, before you ever need it (if you have any questions, the local fire department can help). Fire extinguishers have gauges on them indicating when they need to be replaced and should be checked regularly to make sure they are still functional.

If you're ever in doubt about whether to use an extinguisher on a fire, don't try it. Instead, leave the house immediately and call the fire department.

Plan In Home Escape Routes

Planned escape routes are a necessity, especially if a fire were to occur during the night. Go through each room in your house and think about the possible exits. You should have two escape routes from each room, in case one is blocked by fire.

Inspect the room to make sure that furniture and other objects are not blocking doorways or windows.

Make sure that the windows in every room are easy to open and are not painted over or

nailed shut - remember, these may be your only way out in a fire. Make sure that everyone in the house knows how to open all doors and windows.

If you live in an apartment building, make sure any safety bars on windows are removable in an emergency. Be sure to know the locations of the closest stairwells or fire escapes and where they lead.

If your house is more than one story, an escape ladder is an important safety feature, you should have one escape ladder in each upper-story bedroom.

The ladder must be approved by an independent testing laboratory; its length must be appropriate for your home, and it must support the weight of the heaviest adult in the house.

Be sure the babysitter is familiar with your home, all escape routes and plans in case of fire.

Lightning

Lightning is a serious hazard during thunderstorms and tornadoes. Take special precautions if you are threatened by lightning.

1. When a thunderstorm threatens, get inside a home or large building or inside an all-metal vehicle (not a convertible).
2. Inside a home, avoid using the telephone, except for emergencies.
3. If outside, with no time to reach a safe building or automobile follow these rules:
 - Do not stand underneath a natural lightning rod such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area.
 - Avoid projecting above surrounding landscape, as you would do if you were standing on a hilltop, in an open field, or on the beach or fishing in a small boat.
 - Get out and away from open water.
 - Get away from tractors and other metal farm equipment.
 - Get off of and away from motorcycles, scooters, golf carts and bicycles. Put down golf clubs.
 - Stay away from wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes, rails and other metallic paths which could carry lightning to you from some distance away.
 - Avoid standing in small isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.

- In a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees. In open areas, go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods.
- If you are isolated in a level field or prairie and you feel your hair stand on end (which shows that lightning is about to strike), drop to your knees and bend forward putting your hands on your knees. Do not lie flat on the ground.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

Education

The National Safety Council estimates that 90 percent of unintentional injuries can be prevented by education

Our mission for the Cobb County Public Fire & Life Safety Division is to prevent death, injury and loss of property by fire or other disasters through awareness programs designed for children and adults of all ages in every environment, whether in the home, school, business or places of public assembly.

We educate residents from 3 years of age up to senior citizens in our county. The Public Fire & Life Safety Education unit is specifically designed to educate the public on safety practices. We have five full time positions and more than 40 firefighters instructing the public on all types of safety practices.

The statistics below support our need to educate the public. The National Safety Council provided these statistics:

- An estimated 92 percent of American homes contain smoke alarms, but about only 1/3 of them work.
- In 2005 the Georgia Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner's office reported 108 fire fatalities in Georgia. 94 of these people died without a smoke detector being present.
- Children and older adults are at the greatest risk of dying in a fire.
- Children of all ages set more than 100,000 fires annually.
- One out of four children sustain injuries that are serious enough to require medical attention.
- More than 4.5 million children are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries that occurred in the home.
- Approximately 160 children die from falls every year.

- 2,600 children die in automobile accidents per year.
- Four out five child safety seats are installed improperly.
- 850 children die from drowning accidents per year.
- 800 children die in fires and burn-related accidents per year.
- 670 children died from airway obstructions per year.
- 140 children died from unintentional firearm-related injuries per year.
- Most childhood injuries occur from motor vehicle and bicycling accidents, pedestrian drowning, fire and burns, suffocation, poisoning, choking, falls and firearm injuries. THESE INJURIES CAN BE PREVENTED WITH EDUCATION.

Programs

The following programs are offered by the Public Life & Fire Safety Division of Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services, FREE OF CHARGE to residents and employees of Cobb County:

1. Fire Safety House presentations for all ages.
2. Fourth grade education programs for all students in Cobb County schools (Public, Private, Home school).
3. Kindergarten and Second grade education programs with hands-on experience in the fire safety house.
4. Preschool and daycare safety programs.
5. Free smoke detectors and batteries for all residents who qualify.
6. Senior Citizen Fire Safety and home safety classes.
7. Fireplace and home inspections.
8. Career fairs.
9. Health fairs.
10. Live fire extinguisher training.
11. Puppet shows for all ages.
12. Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention and Counseling Program.
13. Fire warden training.
14. Emergency Response Team training for businesses.
15. Fire drills conducted for schools and businesses.

Prevention through education is the cure

To schedule an appointment or program please call (770) 528-8340

Useful Links

- [National Fire Protection Association](#)
- [US Fire Administration](#) - Department of Homeland Security